

# News from Ed Markey

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MARKEY WELCOMES VA ANNOUNCEMENT: NO MISSION CHANGE FOR BEDFORD VA HOSPITAL NOW**

### ***NEW TERTIARY CARE MEDICAL CENTER ENVISIONED***

**WASHINGTON, DC** – U.S. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) today welcomed the announcement by Veterans Administration Secretary Anthony Principi that in the interim there will not be a mission change at the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial VA Medical Center in Bedford and that the VA will undertake a comprehensive study of developing a new tertiary care medical center to serve the greater Boston area. Bedford is the only Alzheimer's disease Research Center in the VA system serving 100 residential patients, hundreds of outpatient veterans and family caregivers and producing internationally respected clinical research that benefits veteran and non-veteran patients and families.

Rep. Markey said, "I am pleased that Secretary Principi has decided to take a step back and reexamine what is best for our veterans. The Bedford campus is the only Alzheimer's Disease Research Center in the VA system. The suggestion by the Draft National CARES Plan that the Bedford campus services be distributed to other facilities was short sighted and would not only have eliminated the excellent research and support given to our veterans and their families but may have had a devastating effect on the lives of the veterans being cared for with Alzheimer's disease".

Alzheimer's Disease, is a degenerative neurological disease that is on track to become the epidemic of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. There are 4.5 million Americans afflicted with Alzheimer's disease today, and by 2050 that number will increase to as many as 16 million people. One out every two individuals over the age of 85 will develop Alzheimer's disease and with the aging of the World War II veteran population and the baby boomers the veteran population will be a large part of the 16 million Americans who will face the devastation of losing their independence, their personality, and their memories.

Rep. Markey said, "I look forward to working with Secretary Principi in developing a plan that maintains and improves upon the GRECC Unit, in particular the Alzheimer's Unit. Any new facilities must improve access and maintain the high quality of care that veterans and their families have come to expect and deserve."

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